

From: [Ellenberg, Supervisor](#)
To: [Seaver, Derrick](#)
Subject: FW: Denser housing on Stanford's campus
Date: Thursday, May 9, 2019 4:41:00 PM

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, May 3, 2019 5:24 PM
To: Ellenberg, Supervisor <supervisor.ellenberg@BOS.SCCGOV.ORG>
Cc: rick.seaver@bos.sccgov.org; Lisa A. Lau <lisaalau@gmail.com>
Subject: Denser housing on Stanford's campus

Dear Supervisor Ellenberg,

Although this issue does not fall within your district, I wanted to reach out to request your support for the university's plans to improve the residential areas of our campus by making them denser and better suited to our community's needs.

[REDACTED]

We have a desperate housing shortage. As a recently recruited member of the faculty, this was the one factor that nearly caused my family and I to turn down our offer and remain at Carnegie Mellon. We ended up purchasing a house that was much larger and more expensive than we wanted because it was the only one available. We are now barely able to make ends meet. Since my arrival two years ago, my department has lost two of our faculty and failed to recruit three more all-star faculty, entirely on the basis of housing concerns. Housing issues are limiting Stanford's competitiveness. We need additional housing that faculty can afford as soon as possible if we wish for Stanford to remain an outstanding academic institution. The university's plans for replacing large, outdated mansions with smaller, denser, more modern homes are an excellent first step in this direction and should be allowed to proceed.

Housing costs are a constant topic of discussion among campus residents, and younger families are the most affected and concerned.

These families are busy with work and tending to their children, and so usually do not have time to attend council meetings, especially mid-day on weekdays. However, based on my conversations on this topic with about fifty members of our area, whom I know through preschools, SCRA, and the recent tax assessment crisis, there is broad and deep support for re-planning campus residential housing to make it denser and better suited to the current needs of our community. From my conversations with dozens of bright academics considering joining our community, I know that housing is a major deterrent, and that the potential members of our community would be highly supportive of improvements, though they have no voice in this conversation.

I have also heard about some efforts by older, retired faculty and spouses of deceased faculty who wish to prevent improvements so as to lock in a financial advantage for themselves. I think this is shamefully selfish. These lands were designated for residential use by the university in furtherance of the entire campus community, not to entitle a few lucky people, like my family, to reap huge financial gains from housing appreciation. More houses, more densely arranged, at lower cost per house, is what the university as a whole needs. I urge you not to place too much weight on input from these few, non-representative members of our community. The silent majority supports the university's residential plans. For example, my family would welcome similar changes in our own backyard, and would even volunteer our own property for incorporation into a better, denser arrangement in our neighborhood.

My apologies for the lengthy email. I am sure you receive ample correspondence on such issues, but I wanted to make sure you heard from some of the busy, normal faculty on campus who want to see Stanford to maintain its competitiveness in coming decades, who see the value in welcoming new neighbors to our communities, and who are more than willing to make the minor personal sacrifices required to accomplish these goals.

All the best,

